



News Release

Release 0187.13

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USDA Farm Service Agency Urges Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections Beginning Monday, November 4

WASHINGTON, November 4, 2013 — USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Juan M. Garcia announced that the 2013 FSA County Committee Elections begin today, November 4, with the mailing of ballots to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices is December 2, 2013.

“The role and input of our county committee members is more vital than ever at a time when our country faces important choices regarding the funding and operation of our government,” said Garcia. “New county committee members provide input and make important decisions on the local administration of disaster and conservation programs. With better participation in recent years, we have also seen promising increases in the number of women and minority candidates, helping to better represent the richness of American agriculture.”

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. Agricultural producers in each county submitted candidate nominations during the nomination period, which ended on August 1.

Eligible voters who do not receive ballots in the coming week can obtain ballots from their local USDA Service Center. December 2, 2013, is the last day for voters to submit ballots in person to local USDA Service Centers. Ballots returned by mail must also be postmarked no later than December 2. Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office January 1, 2014.

Close to 7,700 FSA county committee members serve in the 2,124 FSA offices nationwide. Each committee consists of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms.

Approximately one-third of county committee seats are up for election each year. More information on county committees, such as the new 2013 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections> or at a local USDA Service Center.

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